

SADDAM HUSSEIN

**IRAQI
POLICIES IN
PERSPECTIVE**

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Saddam Hussein

Iraqi Policies in Perspective

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**Text of President Saddam Hussein's
Press Conference, July 20, 1980, Baghdad**

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INTRODUCTION

by The Editor

On the 12th anniversary of the July 1968 Revolution in Iraq, President Saddam Hussein held a Press Conference in Baghdad on July 20, 1980. The questions raised by hundreds of Arab and foreign journalists who attended the Conference touched upon a wide spectrum of local, Arab and international affairs.

President Hussein was concerned throughout the lengthy Conference not only to explain Iraq's attitudes towards these issues but also to put these attitudes in their ideological and historical context.

This pamphlet, which contains the Conference text, thus provides a deep insight into Iraqi policies for readers interested in furthering their knowledge of Arab politics.

The questions were categorized in 21 groups and read by Minister of Culture and Information, Mr Latif Nusaif Jassim.

1. Iraq and Nuclear Technology

There are questions about nuclear technology, and whether Iraq is trying to manufacture the atom bomb, the stages reached in this respect, the aims of Iraqi-French cooperation in the field of nuclear technology, since Iraq is a signatory of the non-proliferation agreement. What does Iraq aim at from gaining this technology, and has Israel succeeded in thwarting Iraqi efforts in this field?

These questions were asked by newspapers, magazines, news agencies, radio and TV networks from France, Monte Carlo, Belgium, Britain, Italy, Romania, Australia, Holland, Kuwait, Yemen, Lebanon, Qatar, Abu Dhabi.

Mr President: For a number of years now, the Zionist quarters have been spreading news in Europe — and the questions come basically from European media — to the effect that the Arabs are backward people, who do not understand science or culture, who do not realize their responsibilities towards themselves. Therefore they have to have a supervisor using the cudgel with them. These Arabs know nothing but camel-riding, crying over the ruins, and sleeping under the tents. Then suddenly the Zionist quarters came out, two years ago, with an information programme, political and escalating in nature, to say that Iraq is about to have the atom-bomb. The people who know nothing but camel-riding — how can they manufacture the atom bomb? President Nasser ruled 19 years without signing the non-proliferation agreement, while Iraq is a signatory, yet he could not manufacture an atomic bomb to face the Zionist one, which is already

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manufactured, or about to be so, according to Zionist statements, and official or semi-official quarters in Europe and the West in general.

The aims of the campaign are well known. They stem from a sound belief that the value of the human being, in this age, lies in what he knows. The nation which is lagging behind in knowledge is more easily defeated than a scientifically advanced nation. Therefore, they try to extinguish every open Arab eye. They realize that the Iraqi eye is open for the good of the Arab nation; for its dignity, sovereignty, and independence. They know very well that there are no secrets in the Iraqi programme, and that Iraq aims at using the atomic equipment, to be produced from France and Italy, for peaceful purposes. The atom is now used on a large scale, and basically for peaceful purposes. But the superpowers are known to be using it for military purposes. Therefore, the question ought to be asked of the Zionist entity, whether the “camel-riding backward Arabs” are no longer in need of a “supervisor to use the cudgel with them”. If this is so, then why should they not revise their aggressive intentions against the Arab nation?

If the Zionist entity realizes that the Arab nation is in a state of renaissance, then why should not the sensible people in that entity begin some accurate calculations for the future? How can they realize that they will be able to live in the midst of a nation in a state of scientific awakening to such a degree that they began talking now about its possession of the atom bomb in a few years? Instead of raising so much smoke about the Iraqi programme of using atomic energy for peaceful purposes, shouldn't they revise their aggressive intentions against the Arab nation? You should rather direct this question at all the Zionist sympathizers in the West.

You should say if the Arab nation has become capable of dealing with the atom, to such a degree that

you are driven to raise so much dust about the issue, for understandable incentives, does that not mean that you have begun to realize that the Arab nation will be capable of the sound treatment of science? If this is the case, then why do you turn a blind eye to the rights of the Arab nation, and insist in your aggression against the Arab nation? The Zionist entity has been, with all its sympathizers and supporters, basing its calculations on the scientific gap between the Zionist entity and the Arab nation. Therefore, the Arab superiority in millions of people becomes mere zeroes, and we realize this, and realize that they are right in their calculations. But these are not constant calculations.

The Zionist entity and all its supporters and sympathizers should realize that the Arab nation is beginning to rise, and that there is no power to check it, and that the Arabs will know how to deal with atomic energy for peaceful purposes, will know how to use arms and industry, will have millions of Arab graduates every year in various technical fields. Then they should have another view of the Arab nation, their future, their rights.

Instead of imagining that they can thwart the Iraqi programme in the peaceful use of atomic energy, under the pretext that Iraq wants to manufacture the bomb, they should, if they care about their future and the future of humanity, have another look at their aggressive attitudes and mistaken views towards the Arab nation.

France has previously cooperated with the Zionist entity in the atomic field. The Zionist entity is using an atomic reactor at Demona and the Negev for military purposes, because the Zionists want to blackmail the Arabs with the atomic bomb. And the Zionist entity has not signed the non-proliferation agreement. You should ask the Zionist entity whether it has signed that agreement, while Iraq has done so. Why should

a signatory be plagued with such questions, though part of a nation greatly wronged, while the other party is left at large, though refusing to sign that agreement, and using atomic energy for military purposes, and usurping the rights of the Arab nation?

The European friends who have asked this question say that Europe is civilized and developed, on the human, social, economic and cultural levels. To a great extent this is true. But Europe should be human first. It is not enough to make progress in science, economic standards and per capita income. We have to be human first. It is not enough for your papers to speak freely in your own countries only according to liberal democracy. Man should be respected everywhere. It is not enough for man to be human at home and violate humanity elsewhere, or be silent about such violations. The free voices in Europe should speak out loud and bold to say that this campaign should be against the usurpers, the aggressors, those who use atomic energy for military purposes, and not against the people who use it for peaceful purposes, in a modest programme, clear to everyone.

The intentions are clear, the aim is to thwart the scientific advancement of the nation. But the Zionist entity is unable to check the scientific advancement of the nation, because the nation has come into possession of its own destiny.

I am not talking about rulers, including myself: but I am talking about the people which I know very well, the Arab people in Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Algeria, Egypt and everywhere; the people in a nation in possession of self-knowledge. They may lack practical means of expression, but this is a question of time. So, the people has realized that honour and independence cannot be protected without reaching a stage in scientific development comparable to that achieved by others, including the enemy, and especially the Zionist entity. You ask how far has Israel gone

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to handicap our programme. We have no programme to make a bomb for Israel to handicap. Our programme is known to France, to Italy, to international public opinion and to all who seek the truth. It is using atomic energy for peaceful purposes. The Zionist Mossad and all the Zionist supporters in Europe try to chase all the Arabs with open eyes and minds in their dealing with science, even to the extent of physical liquidation, which is what happened to an Egyptian citizen lately.

But let Israel and the entire world realize that the Arab nation is not one person. We are 150 million people. If they kill ten or ten million, there will still remain enough millions of us. What was lacking was not our ability to defend ourselves individually. Some basic questions were lacking. First we had not discovered our identity, our role in history, what is expected of us. Then we had not related this correctly to science and its significance in the present age. Therefore, whoever wants to make friends with us will find friends capable of dealing with international political realities, in their present and future development. Whoever wants to antagonize us will find this nation in one state today but in a differently advanced state a few years hence.

2. Development and Socialist Transformations in Iraq

These are questions about the development plans in Iraq, the industrialization programmes, the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party's attitude to socialism and private property, the development stages to be reached by Iraq in the next five years, since the Deputy Prime Minister has stated that Iraq will emerge out of the developing nations group in 1985. Why has it taken so long to announce the new development plan, and should it be discussed by the National Assembly? Will the recent wage increase affect prices at home? How far can Iraq preserve its national independence while in need of technology from advanced superpowers? These questions were asked by newspapers and news agencies from Britain, Tunisia, Jordan, Italy, Mauritania, Turkey, USSR, France, Lebanon and Spain.

Mr President: Concerning industrialization, I usually do not discuss figures and details. If you want these you can find them with the Minister of Planning or the Minister of Industry. You may visit the Baghdad International Fair to make your own opinion about Iraqi industry. But, generally speaking we are alright; not that we have achieved the best we could have done, since we believe we have a long way to go. But we feel satisfied with what we have achieved in the field of industry, and we are proud of it.

Concerning our attitude to socialism and private property . . . you realize this is a question which calls for lengthy discussion. Yet, we do not want you to think that we evade your question. If you want a full image of the Party ideology you can look into a number of documents which can be provided by the Ministry

Developments and Socialist Transformations in Iraq

of Information, some of which are in translations. In this documents you can find our ideology and practice in the field of socialism. Generally speaking, all the theories of heaven and earth meet on general principles, yet both heaven and earth have their own particularities. In every nation, despite general agreement on certain principles concerning socialism, we find that each nation has its own particular programme in the theory and practice of socialism. In general principles, the basis of all socialist theories is the rejection of exploitation and of the crushing of one group or class of people under pressure, privilege, or distinction of another group or class of people.

The net result of all the technical aspects of socialism is that man should be happy and satisfied with his condition on the human level. So, we do not understand socialism as the system which answers the material needs of man, or fill his stomach. It is rather the system which satisfies man, that is the majority of people, even if there is a small group which does not like this system. Therefore, you find that we have basic differences in our theory and practice of socialism from other socialist systems and other political and ideological movements in the world.

On these bases we do not believe in abolishing private property. We think and believe that private property accompanies socialist activity indefinitely. They work together, on the same level and in the same society. In the theory and practice of our Party, private property does not play a role at a certain stage then come to an end. The role of private property does not depend on a divided attitude, based on what is technically feasible in one particular stage, where we need to employ the private sector, then to put an end to private property when we no longer have a need for private sector investments.

Private property will continue, provided it is socially acceptable. That is when such property does not have

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a material basis capable of having a political influence in favour of a minority, at the expense of the people, the majority. It should not have a social influence capable of spoiling the socialist system. In nature and size, this is a movable state, taking its own dimension with every stage. That is not to say that private property is a state unstable and constantly contracted or expanded in short periods of time. We mean this in the general historical sense of movement in the socialist society. We believe that socialist activity without private property cannot make a happy society, cannot answer the human need of the society. It may fill man's stomach, but it cannot satisfy man.

At the same time, we believe that a private activity ungoverned by these controls cannot fill man's stomach or ensure his humanity in any field. We believe that private activity should extend in all fields: in services, production, agriculture, and in industry in the fields and extend decided by the general socialist programme. We think that private activity is a constant state; therefore we do not believe there will be a surplus in goods and services which will affect the basic increments to wages and salaries we have recently introduced. The socialist sector draws up a prices policy which cannot be violated without punishment.

We believe in holding the central links and letting the remoter elements move freely to serve man in commerce, industry, agriculture and services. We do not want to run small shops for the socialist sector, and spoil the humanity of man while filling his stomach. Therefore you find art in our country sponsored by the State and the socialist activity without pressure. We sponsor art to give it a chance to grow and develop faster. You may find something strange in this country's conceptions in that the socialist sector encourages private activity, not by offering it chances to exploit, but to help it in the service of socialist

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society through financial aid, service facilities and other forms of help extended by the socialist state: roads, telephones, electricity, etc. We encourage the private activity to grow on loans and assistance by the banks of the socialist sector.

This attitude is not based on need for the private sector's money to be invested in speeding up development plans. It is rather based on the need for experience in the private sector to reach certain parts in the society which the socialist sector cannot and should not be preoccupied with. Therefore you find our society happy. All brothers and friends here have spent almost a week in Iraq, and I am sure you have not seen anybody watching you wherever you go, or directing your step. No, we do not worry about our society. Therefore, you find the Iraqis carrying their suitcases all the time to go to America, the Soviet Union, China, or anywhere in the world. We are not worried about our people because they believe in their society and the philosophy of their government. Certainly you found our people happy. I find them happy when I go out and meet them. Every Iraqi has a permanent source of living now: the widow incapable of work, the handicapped, the mentally retarded; the orphans, the disabled. Every Iraqi who can work has an open chance. Those Iraqis who cannot work receive a salary equal to that of the unskilled labourer, though they stay at home.

On these principles, we have our own concept of exploitation. In Marxist literature, exploitation begins with the surplus value. We may have surplus value without exploitation. The Iraqi who declines the State's opportunities and works with the private sector is not exploited. Exploitation is when the State has not yet provided work opportunities and laws to protect the citizen. When a person works with the private sector he does so according to the conditions of that sector, which aims at higher gains whenever there

is a chance. The person then works under what is called “submissive terms”, where the worker’s ability is at a disadvantage. But, now, when a citizen is asked by the private sector to work under certain conditions and refuses, he will not starve, since he has an open chance with the State at all times. Therefore we are living in a socialist society. This is, briefly, the theory of our Party, and these the applications of that theory.

3. Development Plan, 1981-1985

There is a question asking why it has taken so long to announce the new Development Plan and whether it will be submitted to the National Assembly.

Mr President: The five-Year Plan 1981-85 is not late, since it begins in January 1981, and we have still a few months before that date. Yes, it will be submitted to the National Assembly.

4. The Autonomous Region

There is a question about the autonomy rule experience in Iraq, and whether the area has any acts of violence. The question is asked by the Italian news agency.

Mr President: We are pleased with the Autonomous Region of Iraqi Kurdistan, but we have no final formula expressive of a principle which we believe in. We are pleased with the present conditions, but this is not a permanent or a final formula. Law is a creation of man, and man is the offshoot of reality while leading and transcending that reality by imagination and thought. The laws which are acceptable now may be considered outmoded five years hence. The same goes for the permanent constitution, which we do not understand if this is to mean a state of constancy. Man is developing, so is the society, especially in developing countries. Relative constancy in the developed countries of Europe, for instance, after a certain stage of progress leads to more stability than that in the developing countries. In our present state, stagnation is mortal. What suits us is a moving state, balanced, rational, and guided by constant principles. This is what suits us in legal, social and economic life, etc . . . Therefore, we find rules governing relations between a married couple, for instance, may change at a later stage, while the principle is the same. We have permanent principles in understanding the nature of life we want and work for. Therefore you find the civic law different now from what it was two years ago.

Some time ago, we discussed the agricultural sector and there was a proposal to increase the farmer's

The Autonomous Region

property of land. Before the Revolution the proposal was always to decrease that property. Now the proposal comes from the representative of the farmers' association who wants to increase the agricultural area allotted to the farmer. Irrespective of details, this is a sign of a changing reality. In some areas there is immigration into towns, so the agricultural area exceeded the need of some farmers. So, to increase the farmer's allotment is not refused in principle, if, in practice, this increase does not form a social and political influence contrary to the socialist system we are trying to build. Therefore we are pleased with the present conditions of the autonomy, but some of its laws may change without affecting the autonomy itself; they should rather strengthen Iraqi unity and provide necessary atmospheres for our Kurdish people to exercise its local national particularities in the best ways.

Are there acts of violence in the north of Iraq? If you mean acts of violence in the sense European papers talk about, then the answer is No. If you have in mind information provided by certain vagabonds in Europe then the answer again is No.

But if you ask whether there are some shots fired in the North, the answer is Yes. Yet, they are now fewer than those which were fired in tribal inter-fighting before the assumption of power by the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party. These shots are fired by people sent by the poor souls in Iran, people across the borders where there is no full control by the Turkish authorities, people who can infiltrate here or there, maybe five or ten who sneak through the borders, and are chased by the army, or rather the people. You have a chance to go to the North and ask direct questions of the people to find out for yourselves about the chasing of some infiltrator by the people. This is the real victory, when the people do the chasing, not when the army controls any area of Iraq. This is what we said in

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1970. We still believe that real control is when the people defends its land and achievements. This is what happened with our Kurdish people in the Autonomous Area, and we are quite pleased and confident.

The lands in the North are rather complicated. Mountains surround our eastern borders with Iran and our northern borders with Turkey. And you know that there are some superpowers who are working on this and other "jobs". It is not fair to underestimate their efforts and deny their ability in five or six months to convince a score of persons to infiltrate, only to be beaten later by the people, the army or security forces. Some of them get killed, others escape with their wounds. These superpowers may be angry with us if we say they could not convince any trivial person with complexes. We are surrounded by open land all around. The Cuban Revolution is 22 years old, and Cuba is surrounded by the sea, and every now and then you find some problems, and some Cubans even want to leave their country. There are some Cubans who are not loyal to their Revolution. This is only an example for comparison with the conditions in Iraq. Until now there are some communities which do not allow their citizens to leave their boundaries though a long time has passed since their revolutions. We have expelled some people of Iranian affiliation, but they would readily return if they were given a chance. The most difficult sentence on an Iraqi is to send him outside his country, though it is not our habit to do so.

You may have in mind what is sometimes said by some European papers. We tend to believe that some free thinkers in the European media may be misled. But when you go home you can say we were in Iraq and did not find the rebellion some papers talk about in Najaf or Karbala or the mountains. You may say we found the people happy, dancing in the streets and proud of their government system and their leadership, their Party and Revolution. If you find passive

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aspects, do not keep them to yourselves, talk about what you saw and found passive. But when you find positive and good aspects you should not keep it to yourselves either, but show it to the others.

5. The Progressive National Front

There is a question about relations among members of the National Front, the attitude to parties in that Front, the relation between the Ba'th Party and the Communist Party. The question is asked by a Jordanian paper.

Mr President: The relations among parties in the Front is friendly, working towards the same objective of building new Iraq in the service of the Arab nation. This principle is held by the Kurd, the Turkman and the Arab; the citizen in Najaf, Kirkuk, Arbil or Baghdad. Do not think that only the Arabs in Iraq want Iraq to be in the service of the Arab nation. The Kurds believe in this principle too, and they have always expressed this belief throughout the history of Iraq. The Kurds have always been faithful to this principle in the battles of the Arab nation to build the Arab civilization. When we talk about the Kurds we mean the Iraqi Kurds who are a product of a civilization six thousand years old. We do not mean by a Kurd a man from Afghanistan who settled in Iraq and became a citizen. This may be a good Iraqi, but he may be led astray. The Kurd who was born in this country is Iraqi. His roots go deep in this soil.

The Communist Party you talk about has no longer any connection with the Front. When that Party comes back to atone for its misdeeds then that is a question to be discussed in due time. What is wanted of the Communist Party is to atone for its misdeeds then sit with us under the Iraqi roof, to put the honour of Iraq and the Arab nation before any other consider-

ation, to respect the honour and independence of Iraq, to believe that the Iraqi tent is the only one to protect the Iraqis in all conditions, the only tent to ensure happiness, and that they have no other way to follow. Any Iraqi who does not make mistakes will certainly find a place among us. We follow the Iraqi who has one chance in a hundred to come back to the right place. We do not leave him alone, but endeavour to develop this one chance in a hundred. But when he commits treason then that is his end. You may say that Iraqis are violent or go to extremes sometimes. This is true, but they are basically human, and extremely human in every aspect. Therefore, we do not wash our hands of any Iraqi who has gone wrong. Only when the Iraqi commits treason, God forbid, do we wash our hands of him. Now the Communists have no relation with the Front because they have violated its principles and traditions and have gone astray in the lands, sometimes passing by your papers with some leaflets. They seem to enjoy this vagabond life, but we feel sorry for them, since we do not like to see any Iraqi turn vagabond. We would rather see him enjoy dignity, happiness and responsibility towards himself, the Arab nation, and all humanity. We all find it difficult to hear that an Iraqi is knocking at the doors of foreign embassies or newspapers.

6. National Assembly and Democracy in Iraq

There are several questions about the National Assembly, the political formation of the National Front, the percentage of Ba'thist members, your evaluation of the democratic experience in Iraq, the stages reached, and the role of the National Assembly in all this. Does the National Assembly form a final image now or are there further developments? The question is asked by newspapers, magazines and news agencies from Tunisia, Britain, Indonesia, Yemen, Kuwait and Portugal.

Mr President: All members of the National Assembly are Ba'thists in our understanding of the word, and all of them are not Ba'thists in your sense of the word, or say in the imagination of some people who have a narrow view of the Party attitude. The Party today is not the movement which looks at the Ba'th through the organized members of the Party alone. The Party today is the movement which looks at the future and the principles through the eyes of every Iraqi who believes in the Revolution. As the first man in the Party in Iraq and in the State, I cannot tell you who is a Ba'thist and who is not. They are all the sons of Iraq, all believe in the Revolution and abide by its principles; and all believe that the tent of the Revolution is their tent. If what is asked is who is technically connected with the Ba'th Party, which is the system of leadership in the Iraqi society and the Ba'th society in general, then we consider all the Iraqis Ba'thists, believing in the spirit and principles

of the message.

In the Islamic society which was led by the Arabs, it was not asked, narrowly speaking, who was a Muslim and who was not. At a certain stage such a question was asked when the struggle was going on. When this was over, there was no party called the Muslim Party. All the society became Muslim, carrying the Message of Islam. Even the non-Muslims, in the sense you mean when asking about the Ba'th Party, were taking part in the building of the Arab society through the eyes of the leading faith. You see Christian and Muslim building alike, and all serving through a general system led by the new Muslim concepts, while each kept his own particular qualities. Now the leading theory in the Iraqi society is the Ba'th theory. Some citizens may have particularities in their political alignment or modes of thinking, that is in some practical questions which do not contradict their general belief in the leading role of the Ba'th. Therefore we consider all the Iraqis Ba'thists except those who say they are not. Sometimes when I make visits I may joke with a citizen and ask him whether he is a Ba'thist. Then the citizen begins to argue and say: Mr President, you need not ask me such a question, because we have all become Ba'thists. One may not distinguish the organized Ba'thist from the un-organized one. This is the real image of the Party.

But if you think of other people who call themselves Ba'thists in another place and system of government, we feel these have no relation to the Party. The Party is not that of thieves, oppressors or a minority. It is the people's Party, not like other places where if the President of a State cannot steal he would let his brother do so. Here the Head of the State comes from the people, owning every bit of the Iraqi land, yet possessing nothing. All the Iraqi homes are his home yet he owns no home. There is no place called Saddam Hussein's home. The Party is not personal privileges.

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Not with us, it may be somewhere else. The Party is the organization which serves the people and discovers the right line of progress. This organization is found in the general Ba'thist community. Yet the organized members are not alone in this system. They have become the leaders of the Iraqi society in general.

7. Iraqi-Iranian Relations

There are several questions about Iraqi-Iranian relations and the possibilities of solving the present problems between the two countries. What are the effects of skirmishes on the common borders, and can they develop into a general war? Has the religious current in Iran any traces inside Iraq, and does what is going on in Iran really represent Islam? What aid does Iraq extend to the Arabs, the Kurds and the Bakhtiar followers in Iran? What is the size of the Dawa Party in Iraq and does this Party have extensions in the Arabian Gulf area, and has any coordination concerning this been made with the Gulf countries?

These questions were asked by press representatives from Austria, Pakistan, Australia, Turkey, Belgium, Jordan, Mexico, France, N.Y. Times, BBC, Abu Dhabi, Morocco, Mauritania, Portugal, Kuwait, Tunisia and Lebanon.

Mr President: This is the heaviest cluster of questions yet, that is, it has the largest number of press representatives. But let us say from the start that we believe life is constantly changing for the better, therefore, any system of government which comes with this spirit anywhere in the world is a source of pleasure to us. And any system contrary to this spirit will cause our displeasure even if it were in far Africa, because we feel life is in constant progress. Here we have to emphasize two questions: first, we believe in the right of people to self-determination according to what they freely believe. Second, we

believe that in the age of progress any stop or step backward is hindrance to progress even in other parts of the world, by virtue of the new development in the international community and by virtue of intricate relations and interests among human beings. Some heads of states behaved with lack of balance. They began to send telegrams of the type: "Go on, with the grace of God." Some of these heads of states have the Arab nationality, and I feel ashamed of that fact. Would you kindly bear with us a little when we talk about the Arabs; all our friends in Europe and the world know that the Arabs are the parents of human civilization. We say this without being supercilious to you or to the smallest being on the globe. But this is a fact.

Concerning Iran, we behaved differently. We said whatever happened at the choice of the Iranian people has our blessings. Our relations with you stand as they used to do, and as they stand with the rest of the world, based on the following principles, which we defined. We respect you so long as you respect the Arab nation, their right and sovereignty; so long as you respect the rights and sovereignty of Iraq. There is a document to prove that. At that time there was hardly anyone who could speak so openly. Now everyone talks about Khomeini without titles of aggrandizement which mean "the spirit of Allah" or "the sign of Allah". But when hardly anyone could speak of Khomeini we did speak directly. At that time some state leaders behaved like schoolboys sending telegrams. But we said to Khomeini: "Our relations with you will be on these principles." When he violated the principles no one expects us to deal with him on friendly bases. Because this is Iraq. The leader who deals with Khomeini and bows to him will be trodden on by the Iraqis. This country was never created to bow, but to keep a lofty head. This country is faithful to its history and civilization of six thousand

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years. If this country once had a second position, it is time for it to have the first position. If the Iraqi contribution is considered small in comparison to the larger Arab civilization, we should remember that we belong to the entire Arab nation and its great history which will help us to keep a lofty head.

We are not of those who bow to Khomeini, so we stood up to him. He tried the power game with us and we accepted. He was banking on defeating us, and we were banking on defeating him, and we shall see who will win. I think the early results are now indicative, and there is no need to elaborate more. Khomeini has turned a killer in his own precincts, and we have become as you see us. Whether the struggle between us shall develop into a war is a question for Khomeini to decide. We do not want the war, because the bomb does not hit Khomeini's turban alone. It may hit Iranian citizens — we still consider our relation with them based on an open historical view. We still respect the positive affinities which history has preserved with them, and we are still ready to respond to any situation respecting these principles and affinities.

We are not the type who beat the war drums lightly, but the type that if anyone should fire a bullet at our outer fence from far we shall fire a thousand bullets at their inside door. When anyone tries to attack our borders we will have the type of retaliation they know best. When they hurl bombs at the mourners carrying Taha and Firyal's coffins, when they do this through the Iranian teachers at the Iranian school in Baghdad . . . they should know that Firyal and Taha have a very high dowry, and it should be paid dearly. These are their deeds, not ours; we are not the type to dig up the graves of the dead. The Arab nation has never done this in history. When anyone comes near our borders he will have due punishment from the frontier forces. The more they try the worse the punishment.

Some who have the Arab nationality, unfortunately,

and I say it to the end of time, try to boost up Khomeini and give him wrong ideas. But we say if they become tenfold what they are now, they can never do the least harm to us. We still say we are all Arab brothers and cousins, but when it comes to impudence, things take another turn. We have always said we are with the Arabs, and may repeat it a thousand times, we are ready to lay our necks as a bridge for the Arabs to cross on to the shores of safety. But let them understand, those who have ignored these principles, that however they boost up Khomeini or the likes of Khomeini, the Iraqi Revolution is genuine like Iraqi palms, and cannot be shaken.

They should deal with us according to a new reality. The war we do not want. But whoever wants war with us should understand its logic which should be comparable to the principles we mentioned: the Iraqi dignity, sovereignty, heritage, history and potentials too.

Perhaps this answers your question, before we move to the size of Dawa Party in Iraq. This you may evaluate yourselves. There is no need to denote the number of Iraqis who are with the Revolution, the rest are scattered on a number of strata, and one of them is the Dawa Party. But I think the number of those who are with the Revolution makes us happy.

We are not in the habit of conducting security coordination with any party in the world. Our habit is to work for the nation and for Iraq, not for anyone else. But when there is any foreign conspiracy against the most reactionary ruler in the Arab homeland, we take the initiative of giving that ruler whatever information we have on that foreigner, because the land and the people are Arab while the attempt is foreign. It is not a question of ruler and people, this is a matter for the ruler to decide. We are not the type who would conduct security measures with an Arab ruler against an Arab people. This we never do, irrespective of

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whatever good relations we may have with this ruler or that. But we shall warn the Arab ruler, however reactionary, against any Arab citizen who coordinates with the foreigner. These are the principles we grew up on, and on which our leadership of the people is based. We never coordinate with the Gulf or any other Party. This is our upbringing, and that is theirs.

Our relations with the system in Iran are bad. When a member of the opposition comes to us and says: "I want to deal a blow at this turban" do not expect us to send him away and say we know you not! Whoever greets us shall have a double greeting.

8. Iraqi-Soviet Relations

There are several questions on Iraqi-Soviet relations, and the effects of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan on Iraqi-Soviet cooperation, especially in military and economic fields, and whether Iraq intends to lessen its reliance on the Soviet Union. Is it possible that the Soviets will support their presence in some Arab countries, and how shall Iraq stand on that? Have events in Afghanistan affected the relations of Iraq with the Socialist countries? These questions were asked by press representatives from Turkey, AP, Jordan, Portugal, India, USSR, France, Austria and Sweden.

Mr President: What attracts attention in this question is the word "rely". We do not rely on anybody except Iraq and the Arab nation. We have friends in the world, among them the USSR, France, Cuba, Yugoslavia, China and a long list of friends. But friendship has degrees. The degree of friendship with France is different from that with other European countries. Let no one be angry at that. Our friendship with the Soviet Union is different from our friendship with other Socialist countries. And this is arranged according to certain strategic considerations of national interest and points of agreement against a common enemy.

The Soviet Union has always been our friend and we are mutually concerned about this friendship. These principles have been recently reaffirmed in our meeting with the Soviet Minister, the Cultural Com-

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mittee member, who visited Iraq for the July celebrations. The Soviets are concerned about their friendship with Iraq according to the principles I have mentioned.

We say, "Win your friend with clarity before you lose him with ambiguity." We clarify our ideas to the friends we care about, so they understand us clearly and renew their friendship with us accordingly. We also listen to their ideas, and when we are convinced, we also renew our friendship with them.

Recently we had an extensive talk about these points and affirmed our ideas completely and our concern about friendship with the Soviet Union, who in turn affirmed their friendship with us, and their respect for our ideas. Therefore the Soviets are our friends and will remain so, as long as the Soviets respect Iraq and the Arab nation, their independence, and right to choose their own path. The Soviet Union respects these principles and affirms their concern about our friendship according to these principles.

The question of arms . . . You know that most of our arms come from the Soviet Union, putting aside the question of varying sources of supply. Some may go to a friendly nation, paying homage and showing filial feelings. Then when that friendly country fails to do the expected paternal duties, the poor soul goes round looking for a new patron. We have been friends to the Soviet Union. They were never our patrons nor we their protégé to discover one day that we have miscalculated. We have been are are still friends, but when the Soviet Union fails, for reasons of their own, to provide one portion of the armament programme we go and look for it in any country in the world to provide our army with it, in order not to remain an army for Iraq only, but for the entire Arab nation.

Up to now we have no complaint about armaments against the Soviet Union. Sometimes difficulties may arise concerning the choice of arms in quantity or

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quality. Discussion and difference of opinion may occur, but generally speaking, we have no difficulties to complain about in arms supply. When the Soviet Union does not have what we want, or cannot supply it, we go somewhere else where there are conditions and potentials favourable to such supplies. This we have done in getting arms from France or Italy while our basic arms come from the Soviet Union.

9. Iraq's Position on the Afghanistan Issue

Concerning the events in Afghanistan, we naturally disagree with the Soviet Union about our evaluation of their conduct in Afghanistan. We have explained our position, but they still have an understanding of the situation while we have our own, which we have declared as basic principles.

Will the Soviet Union introduce a direct change? We in Iraq believe that when a superpower has the chance to convert friendship into a new form of relation it will act according to this new form. When someone accepts to be a follower of a superpower, there is hardly a superpower in the world to refuse that. But this depends on who will be the follower, and we hope there will be no one in the Arab nation who will be a follower of the Americans, the Soviets, the French, the English, the Italians or any other foreign power.

We can hardly blame the Soviets or the Americans any more than some people who have the Arab nationality when they accept to be followers. If independence is not merely a question of principles but of means, then the National Declaration has clear principles for whoever wants independence and can provide no means. These can be provided to support independence. But he who lacks will or principles we find it difficult to support him with either, or charge him with either, the way he can charge himself.

There are some Arab quarters who follow this international power or that. We should not lay the blame basically on the foreigner, we should rather lay the blame on the Arab side first, then on the foreigner; on the follower not the followed. In the past, they used

to say: What can we do? We discussed this point with some Arabs and said: "Do not give bases to the foreigners. If you say we fear the Soviets and want to face them with the Americans, then you are making it easier for the Soviets to have followers in the Arab homeland, when you give military bases to the Americans." Then we said, "Whenever the Soviet armies came to occupy your lands and were not stopped by the Arab armies then you may call up the American army to face the Soviets. And the American army is not far from you. The American forces are found in nearly all oceans and seas. You wink and they are there."

The National Declaration is not for Iraq, not for a regional interest. We do not need the Arab armies, and they can hear that. If a foreigner should approach our precincts, let the Arab armies be calm. We are able to face the foreigner, the USA or the USSR, if they should come to our land. Outside our land we cannot face a superpower, but inside Iraq we have prepared ourselves to face and fight the largest armies in the world. If they should think that we have the National Declaration for fear of the foreigner, then we have indeed all the fear for them. We are worried about our Arab homeland, Arab people, Arab history and Arab principles of liberation and independence.

Whoever lacks means then the National Declaration is explicit about providing means. The National Declaration says we fight together against the foreigner who comes to occupy our land or harm Arab interests. He may not occupy the Arab land, but may block the straits and affect Arab economic interests. Then we fight him. When Oman says it fears the Soviets and offers facilities to the Americans, we find this unacceptable. If the Soviet army came, and they did not see the Iraqi army fighting the Soviet army before it was met by the Omani army, then they might invite the Americans to their land.

We have repeated this so often that some of our

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friends became annoyed and said that we emphasize the principle to fight any foreigner who fights the Arab nation or violates its freedom if the Arab country concerned should let us do so, since we can fight to defend the land.

Could the Arab government systems abide by these principles! I do not mean the Arab nation, because if you took five thousand citizens from the streets in Cairo and gave them the Declaration to read, without the title or the signature, they would tell you that these are the principles they want and believe in. The same thing would happen with another 5,000 of our people in Riyadh, Amman, Oman, Kuwait, Syria, Libya, Yemen and everywhere. I do not have in mind the Arab people, but some Arab rulers who still think that their card will win if they should yell, "Hey there! We have fallen in the lap of the Soviets. Hurry up Americans!" They want to endear themselves to the Americans. Sometimes they deal with the Zionist entity in a manner unsatisfactory to their plans for a peaceful solution. The Americans have come to deal with the Israelis in a manner contrary to their plans for a peaceful solution. This has become a game in order to say to conservative Arabs: hurry up, or we become communists. Then those Arabs will pay more and help more and the race will be towards America, in order not to become communists. These rulers do not want the Declaration. Because when they endorse it the game is over and they can no longer play. There will be no facilities or bases. In the Arab struggle with the foreigner we support the Arab. Would the foreign friends allow us to address the Arabs often, since this concerns them more!

10. Relations with the USA

There are several questions about Iraqi-American relations. Is there anything new about resumption of diplomatic representation between the two countries? What are your terms and what are the conditions suitable to achieve this aim, with the present growth of economic relations between the two countries, and the invitation of American companies to take part in the next Baghdad International Exhibition?

These questions were asked by press representatives from Sweden, USA, Canada, AP and Kuwait.

Mr President: Through the Iraqi Interests Section in Washington, or through some western visitors, we are sometimes informed that the Americans want to resume relations with us. Sometimes they go outside diplomatic channels and suggest secret meetings, and our answer is that we have nothing to hide in a secret meeting: our policy is obvious. Then they give us examples of some Arab countries where such undeclared meetings were held inside or outside the Arab homeland. Our answer to these queries is what I inform you now. When we are convinced of resuming relations we shall do so on TV for the people to watch. We do nothing we are not convinced of, and when we are convinced we are not afraid to say so. Why should one do anything he is ashamed of? If it is not a shameful deed it should be done before the entire world. When we are convinced that this resumption of relations is not shameful, and it serves the Arab nation and Iraq, we shall take that step without mediators or undeclared meetings. We may even do this without

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American approaches, we may approach the Americans ourselves if we are convinced that such a step serves the Arab nation.

But up to now, we do not feel that resumption of diplomatic relations with the USA serves the Arab nation. But if you ask whether we buy some goods and equipment from America, the answer is Yes. Gone are the times when the Arab can hurt his own interest without hurting his enemy. If some Arab countries do it this way then we do not. Wherever there is anything that could serve the Arab nation and Iraq, now or in the long term, we are ready to buy whether from the Americans or otherwise. But whenever we find any commodity or equipment which may cause harm to the Arab nation, through the benefit it gives to the other party, then we refuse to use or buy, however necessary for our economic or technical relations. The size of economic relations with America is very limited. But when there is a computer in America better than the French computer then we buy the American one, if it carries no conditions or economic infiltration to our society or policy.

Probably it is clear to you now that our economic potentials are of the type that we can refuse the American computer when it carries conditions attached to it. We may take the French or any other computer though with different qualifications.

The Ministry of Commerce organized an Exhibition at the direction of the leadership. A number of international companies were invited to exhibit their products because we want to see the development in every product we want to buy or use. We asked the Ministry of Commerce to hold the Exhibition and invite international companies in one or more fields, except the blacklisted companies. The invitation was extended to the companies which abide by the embargo rules against dealing with the Zionist entity, including American companies. The American companies

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invited were somehow delayed, and therefore did not take part in the Exhibition. When they came late, probably delayed by events in Lebanon, they wanted a special exhibition for them, and we refused. But we said since we gave you the original consent, to participate as companies not as government representatives, you may exhibit in the Baghdad Exhibition next year. We still keep that promise and feel we have a national interest here which does not conflict with our nationalist interest.

11. Relations with Western Europe

There are several questions about Iraqi relations with Western European countries like the Iraqi-British relations and the fears of British businessmen of restrictions in Iraq, and the effect of that on executing development programmes. There is a question about Iraqi relations with Austria, Spain, Italy, Finland and Japan. Can Mr President explain the Iraqi concept of equal relations with Western European countries and the effect of the European position on the Arab question?

These questions were asked by press representatives from Austria, Britain, Jordan, Lebanon, Portugal, India, Italy, Japan and Spain.

Mr President: In our speech on the occasion of the July Revolution, we clearly explained our concern to develop our relations in all fields with Europe and Japan, and we still believe this to be the right programme. This programme has been in effect for a long time now. But we do not put all European countries on the same level from the political point of view, which has its role in deciding the size of commercial and economic exchange, since these are controlled, and the purchase is done mainly through the socialist sector. Therefore, the political decision is present in general terms.

Let the British businessmen be confident, if they do not come as representatives of the old Great Britain to occupied Iraq. As businessmen, they have their interests, and we have ours. In their behaviour, the Iraqis are extremely pleasant with foreigners, so long

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as they behave according to principles of honesty. But if they thought they could come to bribe the Iraqis and yet escape trial, then no Iraqi citizen or official would give them security. One businessman gave a bribe. What shall we do to him? We asked a number of lawyers, Englishmen and the embassy to witness the trial and investigation. Our laws have certain punishments for bribery of foreigners or fellow Iraqis, and in the case of the Iraqi it may reach to capital punishment. An Iraqi Under-Secretary was sentenced to death because he had dealings with a foreign company on the basis of a commission. When an English or any businessman comes to Iraq he should realize first that this is not a country of commissions, bribes or shady deals in politics or trade. Here we have everything in the open. When we have a project, all businessmen should compete equally, without going to an official in the planning or other Ministries to ask for special details about tendencies, size of expenditure allotted by the government, or offers by other companies. Such a person is asking for punishment. To such a businessman we cannot offer any security.

We offer security to any businessman who has plain and natural dealings. I think we have two foreign businessmen under sentence, only two of all the western businessmen, and they deserve the sentence because they behaved in a way punishable by the law. When an Iraqi misbehaves in the streets of London you put him in prison. We have no objection to your laws. We respect your laws, so you should respect ours. Our laws punish whoever tries to bribe an Iraqi official. Other than that, the foreigner has all the freedom he has when he goes to Britain, America, or anywhere in the world. The Iraqis do not deal roughly with the foreigners, and the foreigners know that. But when the foreigner tries to put his hand in the Iraqi's pocket, the Iraqi holds his pocket and takes the foreigner to the

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police. These are the Iraqis. This is their Party education.

12. Iraq and the Cyprus Question

There is a question about Iraqi relations with Turkey and Greece, the Iraqi attitude to the Cyprus question and the effect thereof on the two countries concerned with Cyprus, whether Mr President sees Iraqi relations with Turkey developing in the economic field, and whether the death of some Turkish citizens on the borders will have any effect on relations between the two neighbouring countries.

These are asked by press representatives from Turkey and Greece.

Mr President: The Cyprus question is not new; it started even before the Turkish army entered Cyprus. The Iraqi position on this question is clear, whether in the UN or in the relations and discussions with Turkey and Greece. Yet this has not passively affected our relations with either Turkey or Greece. Turkey is a neighbouring State and we respect our relations with her. Since the First World War our relations with Turkey have not suffered any tension on either side. We are both concerned about the development of this friendship in the interest of both neighbours. But, unfortunately, certain quarters in Turkey, under Zionist, Masonic, or chauvinistic influence may sometimes lead certain official quarters to make mistakes in viewing these mutual relations. Some years ago they used to ask about certain Turkman citizens of Iraq. No one has entrusted us with any citizens of their own. This is an Iraqi land and these are Iraqi citizens. They should know this is neither Turkish nor Iranian territory. Whoever has buried anybody in our

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territory let him dig him up and go away with what he finds. We do not accept anyone asking about any Iraqi citizen, or exercise any supervision on any Iraqi. One day it was Great Britain, another we were part of the Ottoman Empire, and one day the Shah was great. Let all this come to an end. Let friends and others know that new Iraq respects others so long as the others respect Iraq, and vice versa. Sometimes we hear talk of this sort. Do the Turks accept our enquiries about the Arabs in Eskandaron? We do not like or respect this kind of behaviour.

We are keen on improving the already good relations with Turkey in economic, political and other aspects. When these unpleasant things come to an end our relations will greatly improve on all levels. This is the Iraqi nature. In the past our nature in politics was not obvious. Now the owners of the house have taken over. They are now in command and carry the banner in the name of their people. All the others have to know how to deal with Iraq on bases of mutual respect. Some time ago a few Turks infiltrated across the Iraqi borders. What has brought them there? Some Iraqis were killed on Turkish territory but we did not raise Cain. A truck-driver or a citizen passing by may be killed there, and a number of these incidents have happened in Turkey, but we have always treated them within the framework of friendly relations and good neighbourliness. There is a no-man's land, 10-20 km deep, on the borders with Turkey and Iran. The reason is to check infiltration activities of a subversive nature in two areas: one with unfriendly Iran, the other with Turkey which has no control over its borders, a matter we all know. Some Turkish infiltrators were chased by Iraqi helicopters and shot dead. This is quite natural, so why all this chaos? The Turk has no more value than the Iraqi. From now on the Iraqi has as much value as anyone in the world. Other than that we are very concerned with our mutual relations. As I have

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mentioned, since the First World War nothing negative has happened with Turkey. What is happening is good always. Even when there is nothing good, there is nothing bad either. But some centres of influence in media and politics do not seem to care enough about Turkish interests and raise so much trouble about trifles. Yet the more responsible officials express the desire to develop and enhance relations with us.

13. Relations with the Third World Countries

There are questions about Iraqi relations with the Third World countries, the Arab attitude to Africa and Latin America, the suggestions to develop Iraqi relations with these continents, especially in the economic field.

These questions were asked by press representatives from Nigeria, Bahrain, Japan, Brazil, Venezuela.

Mr President: We believe that the growth in the number of the non-aligned countries indeed will render great service to humanity and stop the outbreak of a Third World War, or at least lessen such possibilities. A contrary state in the Non-Aligned Movement and among Third World countries will increase the possibilities of war.

At the same time, we believe that protecting the independence and sovereignty of smaller nations in the Third World against attempts by superpowers calls for solidarity among Third World nations.

In our nationalist understanding of protecting our sovereignty, we make a clear connection with deepening relations with the Non-Aligned Movement in the world. Therefore we have a growing concern with our relations with Latin America, Africa and Asia, especially with the non-aligned countries. We believe that this relation strengthens our national independence and contributes to supporting peace in the world. The superpowers fight over the Third World. If the Third World countries remain open for contention, then the superpowers would divide them into

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spheres of influence. But when this contention is decided, the superpowers will have new forms in dealing with international questions, thus lessening chances of war. When a superpower tries to swallow up a smaller country and finds the other smaller countries turn into thorns in the throat, then a superpower would hesitate trying to take a bite. Therefore, we believe that strengthening relations among the Third World countries, and the non-aligned countries in particular, will serve the national interests of the Third World and non-aligned countries.

14. Iraq and the Arab-Zionist Conflict

There are several questions about the Camp David accord and the role of Iraq in facing the conspiracy on the Palestinian question. How does Iraq stand on the joint Arab action to face this conspiracy? Is there an Arab country trying to violate the boycott on the Camp David accord, and what will be the attitude towards that country? How does Mr President evaluate conditions of escalating Zionist aggression and the possibility thereof to lead the area into a new war, and what is the role of Iraq therein?

These questions are asked by press representatives from Tunisia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Australia, AP, Mexico, Indonesia, USSR, Lebanon, Belgium, Abu Dhabi.

Mr President: We believe that what serves the entire Arab nation is to abide by the decisions of the Baghdad Summit and the plan drawn up by that Summit to encircle the joint plan made by the Americans, the Zionists and Sadat.

We believe, together with all Arab leaders and representatives who signed or endorsed the Baghdad Summit decisions, that the Camp David plan has caused great damage to the Arab nation. Therefore it should be encircled to alleviate its actual and psychological effects on the Arabs.

Naturally some Arab countries have not endorsed these decisions, or they had reservations in Baghdad but they withdrew those reservations in Tunis. Then they started to vacillate. But what concerns us is a true conviction, not a formal approval with opposing behaviour. Some countries behaved contrary to the

spirit of the Baghdad Summit, like Somalia, Oman and Sudan in varying degrees and for various reasons. Sadat must be isolated, but some Arab countries have not been acting accordingly. Even when some of them hesitate in going to Cairo, they do that for reasons connected with their internal affairs, not because they have the Baghdad Summit decisions in mind. We have to try and win that group back to the Baghdad Summit fold. Our interest is to support the Summit decisions by gaining the majority to our side. It was hoped to gain that majority and not to leave anybody vacillating between the Baghdad Summit and Camp David. We had hoped to isolate Sadat completely. Yet some Arab countries are still more on the side of Camp David than on the side of the Baghdad Summit.

How shall Iraq stand in case of a Zionist aggression? I think you know enough about Iraq even before we assumed power. In the time of the monarchy, Iraq defended Palestine in 1948. In 1967 Iraq sent an army to fight on two fronts. In 1973 Iraq fought air battles on the Egyptian front, and fought with all weapons on the Syrian front and protected Damascus from falling, and we were assisted by the Syrian patriots. I think it was only Iraqi planes which fell on the occupied territory of Palestine. We have firm principles which we have always repeated. We are always with the Arab against the foreigner. When there is a war between Arab and foreigner we do not ask who is to blame. And let the foreign friends not blame us for saying so. In the aftermath we may blame the Arab side, but we do not ask at the start whether the Arab or the foreigner is to blame. Without hesitation we take the Arab side. These are firm principles in our programme.

15. Security of the Arab Gulf

There are several questions on the security of the Gulf area, since there is a general feeling that some of the Arab Gulf States are targets of subversion to endanger their stability and Arab nature. There are also some attempts to encircle those countries with foreign bases and military pacts. What are the Iraqi plans to face challenges of the Arab Gulf and the foreign interests therein? What is the attitude towards States which offer maritime or air facilities to superpowers?

These questions are asked by press representatives from Australia, Kuwait, Pakistan, Ras-el-Khaimah, Lebanon and Abu Dhabi.

Mr President: After the Algiers Agreement of 1975, which had its own circumstances, I visited Iran and met with the Shah. We said to him very frankly: "The relation between us is no longer that of war or the brink of war. But you should realize that war may break out between us at any moment, even after mutual relations have been straightened out, if you act aggressively against any Arab Gulf State. If you care about continuing relations with your neighbours you should revise your wrong relations in the Gulf, and particularly you should withdraw your forces from Oman. If you say you have your own interests and Oman lies on the Hormuz Straits, controlling your lines of communication, then we suggest the issuing of a Declaration saying that all Gulf countries consider Gulf security a joint responsibility. That is to say that navigation in the Gulf should be free according to international laws. If anything should obstruct that navi-

gation, then we have jointly to find a way to bring things back to normal.”

The Shah agreed to these principles and said he was prepared to sign immediately. As to the Iranian forces in Oman, he said they were sent at the request of Sultan Qabus. We said: “If this is the case with your forces in Oman, what about the three Arab islands?” He began a long discussion on the three Arab islands and we wanted the discussion to be held with all the Gulf Arabs to reach a final form about the situation. Unfortunately some Arabs thought they could persuade Iraq to reach something akin to a pact. In the Foreign Ministers’ conference in Oman, some of these ideas had surfaced, but Iraq was very clear in its stand. We said we are against any form of pact. We have these principles which we can formulate into a declaration, a thing that was not achieved. Last February we announced the National Declaration. In our opinion, if the Gulf countries abide by it as a general policy then they can secure the security of the Arab Gulf. This is a task for the Gulf people alone. In the National Declaration there is a clear principle about not resorting to arms to solve problems with countries neighbouring the Arab homeland. Here we handle the Iranian question when Iran realistically and courageously handles Arab rights and withdraws from the three Arab islands, establishes relations with Iraq and the Gulf States on the basis of respecting sovereignty fully, and corrects the Shah’s mistakes in this question.

In some Arab countries they ask why we kept silent about the three islands from March 1975 to the present, when the Shah was deposed. They should rather ask themselves why they kept silent seven long years. While Iraq was in struggle with the Shah over the three islands from 1971 to 1975, why have they kept silent? Why should we keep silent about the occupation of land by X and not when occupied by Y? Is it possible

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to accept the Soviet occupation of Iraqi territory, since the Soviets are friendly and more socialist than Khomeini? What have we seen of Khomeini's socialism? The people are hungry and the country is in chaos. Can we accept a Soviet occupation of Jordan since [the USSR] is a socialist country? Or accept Pakistani occupation of Syria since Pakistan is a Muslim country? The answer is No to all this.

We have not kept silent about the islands, but have changed the mode of our demands. Immediately after the agreement I visited Iran and discussed the question with the Shah and said to him very frankly: "Unless you redeem your treatment of sovereignty questions in the Gulf, the Iraqi-Iranian agreement will explode at any moment." At that time our military position was not at its best. These facts must be mentioned not to forget our rights, but to adapt the methods to achieve those rights. In March 1975 our Air Force had only three bombs left as a result of the 12-month war against the experience and plans of the Shah and the Americans who stood behind Barzani. We had 60,000 casualties in that war, 17,000 in the Army. Only three heavy bombs were left in the Air Force, in addition to a great shortage of ammunition. The Iraqi Army could not go on, but we did not compromise over our rights. We amended the Shatt-al-Arab Agreement and reclaimed usurped territory since 1913 equal to the area of Bahrain. Thus we obliged the Shah to kill his own pawn. In that difficult military condition our army had high morale. We kept these facts from even the comrades in the leadership. Only three knew of them: Comrade al-Bakr, Saddam Hussein and the Chief of Staff.

Now we have the means to reclaim the islands, so why should we keep silent? For whose sake? Who has done any favour to the Arab nation that we should keep silent about a violation of its sovereignty? He may have given you a loan of 200 million dollars. Is

that a favour to keep you silent about his claims to other territory? He does you a favour and you give him a piece of land? Some of those who hold a certificate of Arab nationality have recently become progressive! "Hey . . . hey . . . ! We have fallen, we shall become communists, we shall become Soviets . . . Hurry up!"

They were friends getting loans from the Shah. We did not get any loans from the Shah. They made visits to the Shah! Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr was Head of State and did not visit Iran. In the Algiers Agreement, Iran's Prime Minister was to come to Baghdad first, then Saddam Hussein was to go to Iran, then the Shah was to come to Baghdad. We stopped at that. Neither did the Shah come to us nor did the Iraqi Head of State go to Iran. But the others went to Iran begging to get loans. We sometimes forget details, but in time they should be mentioned.

Now they have become friends of Khomeini, because Khomeini has ousted the Shah. Good for Khomeini, but this does not mean he should come to bully us. He ousted the Shah and the Arab nation wanted to oust the Shah. But the Shah is Khomeini's Shah. Sometimes they say they have suffered so many years under monarchy. Who asked them to be patient? We Iraqis are not patient. The Iraqis soon revolt. When we do not like a ruler we send him to his end in four or five years. They say they were never liberated before Islam. This means they were twice liberated, and both times by the Arab nation. The first time was by the Muslim Arab army, coming from the Arab peninsula, with the help of the Iraqis in the Islamic area. They were liberated from Xerxes and his followers. The second time they could not liberate themselves before the entire Arab nation was liberated and all colonialism and tyranny ousted. The Arabs received the Iranians as guests in the underground resistance. We gave them a radio programme for seven

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long years; we gave them money and arms and whatever they needed to fight the Shah. It all began there and then; and when they went to Lebanon they were trained by the Palestinian commandos and supplied with arms. This is their second liberation, through the Arab nation, and by Arab support and means.

When we assumed power in July and put Iraq on the path of Revolution we did not make contact with any Arab or foreign State. No one gave us any money or a single bullet. The first July Revolution was twenty years before their own. So how should they do the Arabs any favour? They liberated themselves with Arab means, with the religion brought to them by the Arabs. In 1958 and 1968 we did not liberate ourselves by religion. We came with the faith of the land though we believe in the values of heaven. But we acted with the faith of the Ba'th Party. So how can they do us a favour? The faith with which they liberated themselves was brought to them by the Arabs, their training and upkeep was given by the Arabs, and Khomeini was lodged 14 years in Iraq, so why this haughty attitude?

Some of these little people, who hold Arab nationality, do find themselves little. Palestine was never a burden on them to say they have done anything for Palestine. Palestine was their weapon against the Shah because the people in Iran was Muslim. They used to say the Shah is against Palestine. They used Arab Palestine and the religion the Arabs brought to them; they used Arab training and hospitality and yet say they have done the Arabs a favour. Do you see how they forget themselves when they talk? All they did up to this moment is to expel the Israeli consulate and ask the PLO to take its place. We think the Muslim people of Iran should be ashamed to accept an Israeli consulate on their land all this time. Except Turkey, there is no Muslim country where there is an Israeli consulate. This we find shameful. Having no such

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consulate, even Pakistan and Afghanistan did not say to the Arabs, “We have done you a favour and we should occupy your land.” Is it a favour to expel the Jews which they have accepted, contrary to Muslim countries? They have accepted the Zionists who occupy Jerusalem. It is a shame to accept a Zionist consulate all this time. They should have ousted their Shah on the first day that consulate was open.

16. Iraq and the Front of “Steadfastness and Confrontation”

There are four questions about the Front of Steadfastness and Confrontation, and the nature of relations between Iraq and members of this Front, especially Syria.

The questions are asked by press representatives from Tunisia, Kuwait, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Finland, Qatar and Abu Dhabi.

Mr President: This Front was never a front of faith. A number of countries, each with its own cause, met around it in an exchange of interests. This fact should not make anyone angry. Each State has a different system and policy, but they meet around certain points. If it is thought they agree on the Palestine question more than others, the answer is No. Some are faithful to Palestine, others look at the cause as if it belonged to South-East Asia, because they do not believe in the Nation. Others have their lands occupied and are therefore against Zionism. Up to now we do not know whether this is a regional or a national attitude. Until they recover their land and remain against Zionism we cannot say this is a national attitude. Even the ants attack the farmer when he treads by mistake on what we call the “anti-village”. It is instinctive to defend one’s land. I differentiate between the ruler and the people. When the Moroccan army comes all the way from Morocco to fight in Golan, I cannot but call this a valiant soldier fighting with a nationalist feeling. But I cannot give the ruler the same description until he defends his land against Zionism, and persists in his attitude against Zionism. But naturally

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all our Arab nation is nationalist, in Democratic Yemen, in Syria, in Iraq, in Algeria, in Egypt and everywhere, irrespective of our opinion of the ruler. The people are patriots and nationalists.

A number of Arab States organized themselves, for obvious reasons, into the so-called Front of Steadfastness and Confrontation. Good luck. We are not annoyed by this. But we always say that the Arab action we like should stem from a nationalist interest, or treat the local national question without conflict with the nationalist interest. Our friends in this Front have taken a decision to form a military force comprising maritime, air and land forces. They called it a secret decision. But secret from whom?

The maritime forces are to be placed in Algeria, which I think is rather far away from the frontlines with the Zionist entity. The land forces are to be placed in Libya, which is also, I think, far from the Zionist entity. The air force is to be placed in Syria, which, in fact, is near enough to the frontline. But a quick look at this decision will show its nature. If what is intended is to confront the Zionist entity, then all three forces should come to Syria or Jordan. But even this has not been carried out. This is one image of the action our friends have in mind. All good luck to them since they mean well! And all bad luck to whoever has bad intentions! We do not blame the members of this Front, even those of whom we have no good opinion. We do not have a very good opinion of some of them, but we consider them a group agreed on some opinion. We tend to strengthen the line of the Baghdad Summit, and we do not tend to axis. This does not offer anything. The proof is that this Steadfastness and Confrontation Front has been in existence for several years. But up to this time we have seen neither steadfastness nor confrontation. Nothing has happened since.

But the Baghdad Summit has attracted great

Iraq and the Front of "Steadfastness and Confrontation"

attention, and its decisions have stopped the psychological collapse. The people began to say Sadat acted and the Arabs are silent. No, the Arabs are there; they reject, but they also support the geographical front line to turn it into a real front line. But nothing has happened since the establishment of the Steadfastness and Confrontation Summit Front. If you know of anything, then that is a different matter.

When we have a poor opinion of some members of that Front it does not follow that we have the same opinion of all. Our relations with Algeria are good, and they are particularly so with President Chadli. But of the others we have a different opinion.

17. The Next Arab Summit and the National Declaration

These are questions about the next Arab Summit Conference in Amman and the Iraqi role through the working paper presented at the Arab Foreign Economic Ministers' meeting. Will the Amman conference stick to the common minimum denominators achieved in Baghdad and endorsed in Tunis, or will Iraq try to develop the Arab attitude towards the ability to face challenges surrounding the Arab nation? Does the National Declaration of last February form a basis to fortify the Arab front against dangers?

These questions were asked by press representatives from Bahrain, Lebanon, USSR, Turkey, Kuwait, Jordan, Yemen, Britain, Japan and Abu Dhabi.

Mr President: We should not understand the Baghdad Summit decisions as technical measures only. They are political and ideological in the first place; thus they form the basis for technical and practical measures, whether concerning an economic and financial boycott, the support of the front lines, the PLO and our people in the occupied territories, and on all other levels. The most important measure is to back the steadfastness of the Arab nation, then to ascend to the stage of confrontation from a better position, to defeat the psychological and actual aims of the Camp David conspiracy, which are to lead the Arab nation to psychological surrender as a step to actual surrender.

This is the state of these forms which does not keep a static position, but should develop with the neces-

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sities of development in the life and situation in Arab countries and the world. But we should keep up the spirit of the Baghdad Summit in the principles mentioned, which is to thwart the Camp David designs and lead the Arab nation to a better position to face the enemy. Therefore, we hope the Arabs will advance the forms of action agreed upon in the Baghdad Summit, to a better position in action towards these objectives. So, we do not expect the Amman Summit to be a conference on economic relations. Here I have to explain a point.

We had hoped the Arabs would hold a Summit in Amman on economic relations other than the Amman Summit, that is a conference between the Tunis and Amman Summits. Some Arab friends said that would be difficult, especially Hafiz Asad, the Syrian President. He preferred the Amman Summit to discuss economic questions and we agreed. In that sense, the next Amman Summit is not a Summit on Arab economic relations alone, but a Summit to discuss political and economic questions presented at the Amman Foreign and Economic Ministers meeting, which were seriously discussed to bring Arab joint economic relations to a higher level.

As for the National Declaration, it came from Iraq but it is not for Iraq; it is for the Arab nation. We do not insist on discussing the National Declaration in the coming Amman Conference. But when the Arabs want to discuss it we shall be pleased. If some want to blackmail us in order to discuss it, then we will ignore that and refuse to be blackmailed if there are no excellent chances to endorse the Declaration conscientiously. Most Arab States agreed on it. But from the practical point of view we consider no one is yet in agreement. And I hope I do not offend any one of our brothers, the Arab leaders, who showed true support for the Declaration and wanted a Summit to be held soon to discuss it.

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We disagreed; these will remain alive irrespective of rulers' attitudes. These principles say that the Arabs should not use arms against each other. They should stand together against foreign aggression. They should establish economic relations among them so that no State will starve while the other is satisfied to the full. The relationship with neighbours of the Arab nation should not be based on the use of force. Because when we do so, we turn our neighbours into a gap through which the enemy will enter, by means of facilities and bases offered.

These principles cannot be annulled. If they are endorsed this year or the next the Arab masses will keep insisting on them. There will always be a need for them in the next Summit.

This is not an Iraqi topic. It has become clear to the Arabs. When the Arabs want to discuss these principles we shall be very pleased. If there is to be a bargain to deviate from these principles, then the Declaration will remain alive. We will fight with it on the popular level, rather than having a dead form of approval, saying the Iraqi Declaration was endorsed. These formalities are worthless. We want the essence. We want the Arabs to really say that we do not approve of offering facilities and foreign bases on our territory. When we say that those who refrain from doing so shall be boycotted we mean a real boycott. But if the Arab officials are not yet ready for this subject, then we are very patient, we can wait for the idea to brew, and will fight for it for ages.

18. Oil Policy

Questions about the OPEC Summit and the oil attitude, the effect of oil on international relations, the Iraqi policy in the field of production and prices, and whether the OPEC Summit to be held in Baghdad next November will take decisions on price increase and finding new bases for production rates. How does Iraq stand on oil surplus and the investment of revenues by some producing countries as assets in international banks? What is the Iraqi plan to support the Third World economies affected by the increase in oil prices?

These questions were asked by press representatives from Kuwait, Venezuela, Mexico, Finland, Monte Carlo, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Jordan, Austria, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

Mr President: There are two points to be clarified before we give a direct answer. First, there are attempts by imperialist and Zionist quarters in the world to distort the Arab attitude concerning oil. They constantly try to connect inflation to price increases, forgetting or ignoring the role of industrialized countries, monopolies and stock-exchange bargains in the question of inflation. These are basic factors in inflation where oil forms a minor part. As a part of this plan, these attempts try to isolate the Arabs from the Third World countries by suggesting that the economic difficulties of those countries are basically caused by oil price increase.

Secondly, we believe that the new colonialism lies basically in the scientific, technical and economic gap

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between the Third World countries and the industrially advanced countries. The narrower the gap, the easier it becomes for the Third World countries to gain freedom and protect their sovereignty and independence. The wider the gap, the more serious the dangers to the Third World countries, and some may be crushed down.

According to this and the previous analyses, and according to our firm principles and our human role, we believe that we have to play any role which can put the Third World countries in a better position. The basic responsibility for any failure in the Third World countries lies on the industrialized countries, whether under colonialism or when those countries came out to the Third World as multinational companies or in other forms, bringing in inflation and keeping down prices of raw materials imported from the Third World countries. In accordance with this analysis, Iraq submitted the idea of setting up an International Fund. The idea is based on simple calculations: the result of industrialized countries' responsibility, due to their export of inflation to the Third World countries, should be matched with sums of money put into this Fund. And the result of oil countries' responsibility, due to the annual price increase suffered by Third World countries, should be matched with sums of money put into the Fund. According to a certain formula, the Third World countries begin to develop without suffering inflation or the oil price increase. Thus we protect the Third World against collapse, and at the same time a balance shall be effected between the annual oil price increase and the inflation factor, and a state of relative stability is reached in the international economic situation.

It was during our visit to Yugoslavia in 1974 that we suggested the idea of the International Fund to the late Jamal Bedetch. Then we developed this idea and submitted it for discussion in a number of regional

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conferences, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Islamic Conference. All these conferences approved these basic principles. So at the next OPEC Summit in Baghdad we shall discuss the oil countries' strategy over the next twenty years, including production and prices. Basically we shall start from these principles to meet our responsibilities towards the Third World nations and the entire world. Mr Tayeh Abdul Karim, Minister of Oil, may have something to add.

Minister: As you said, Mr President, at the next Summit we shall discuss a long-term strategy concerning the position of the area, supporting its role and relations with the Third World countries, the relation of these countries with industrial countries, that is the establishment of a new international economic system. First among the questions Your Excellency mentioned is discussing the Iraqi proposal to support the developing nations. The strategy, as you mentioned, Mr President, is concerned with drawing up a price policy for the next twenty years, a production policy, taking into consideration the change to oil alternatives, and following technical and scientific developments towards these alternatives, while the world is facing a crisis in this decade, that is the change to new and developing energy sources, whether nuclear or solar energy.

19. The Non-Aligned Movement's Role in World Politics

Several questions on the role of the Non-Aligned movement in international politics. The role of Iraq, as host to the Seventh Summit, inside the movement and the effect thereof on emphasizing the independent role of the Non-Aligned countries and stopping polarization attempts on the part of superpowers aiming to influence the States within the movement. What are the fields of economic cooperation among the Non-Aligned states? Does Mr President think that the movement will have a greater or a smaller influence in international relations?

These questions are asked by press representatives from Sweden, Jordan, USSR, Sri Lanka, Finland, Britain, Belgium, Indonesia, Romania, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

Mr President: We believe that the Non-Aligned Movement will face, as before, difficulties, pressures, and attempts from various international quarters to penetrate its ranks. Then there are some countries which are in fact aligned, though they belong to the Non-Aligned Movement. But in our view, the importance of the movement will increase with time, and not the contrary, since man always looks forward. Modern man looks more towards freedom and independence and gives them more active expression and a higher significance than is the case in the past. Therefore, we think the Non-Aligned Movement will be more important. We believe that there are certain ideas which, when put into practice inside this movement, shall reflect positively and effectively on international

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relations. These ideas include: the general framework of what relations should be like between oil countries and industrial countries and the benefiting Third World countries; the basic ideas in the discussions of the 77 countries of the North-South dialogue; in addition to the ideas we submitted in a number of regional conferences to encourage specialized organizations of raw materials in the Third World, that is to have an organization for cotton, another for wheat, a third for copper, zinc, etc. . . along the lines of OPEC, to protect the Third World countries exporting these raw materials, and help them to reach fair prices and economically better production. Iraq has been preparing documents on what economic relations should be like among the Non-Aligned countries. In my estimation, the ideas presented by Iraq on the economic relations are mostly effective inside the Non-Aligned Movement. Iraq does not submit these ideas because it seeks its own benefits, rather because it is willing to give. For practical and psychological reasons, the ideas are taken seriously when presented by someone who wants to pay. This is what happened to our suggestions to help countries and organizations of the front lines. They were taken seriously at the Baghdad Summit because Iraq named its portion of that assistance. It was not possible for anyone to say we were not serious. Some Arab brothers were suggesting financial assistance to some Arab countries at the meeting of the Foreign and Economic Ministers in Amman while they had not paid up their share and commitments according to the Baghdad Summit. When we hear this we immediately say that this person is not serious, because if he were, he would have carried out his commitments, which were decided in a particular situation. We believe that the next Baghdad Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement will have a significant role in reaching a form of serious economic relations among the Non-Aligned countries. We

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believe that we have enough time before the next Summit for the movement's members to develop such forms to strengthen the non-aligned tendency inside the group.

20. The Lebanese Crisis

Several questions asked by the Lebanese press: We have noticed, Mr President, that your speech on the occasion of the July 17-30 Revolution did not refer to Lebanon. What is the Iraqi position on a Lebanese solution? Is there an Iraqi initiative in this respect? How does Mr President see the best way to face the continual Zionist violation of Southern Lebanon, and why does Iraq not participate in the Arab Deterrent Forces?

Mr President: Do you want us to participate in the Arab Deterrent Force in order to slaughter the Lebanese and the Palestinians? What have these forces done except that, and are still doing very often? If you want us to take part in that slaughter, then the Iraqis are not of this type. We cannot see Arab blood shed by a foreign sword, even the bad Arab. We cannot send Iraqi forces to join the Deterrent Force in slaughter. We cannot have political games in Lebanon. We have no commercial deals or extra army to send to Lebanon to be spoiled, or to break into houses and shops. We have no political deals to carry out in Lebanon. This is why we have not, and will not take part in the so-called Deterrent Force.

Why have we not referred to Lebanon in the speech? Because Lebanon is alive in our hearts as an Arab country. Lebanon is wounded, and is still bleeding. You notice that in the speech we talked about the Arab situation as a whole and mentioned Palestine in particular. We always talk about Lebanon, and feel the best solution for Lebanon is to be left to the Lebanese

themselves. If the Arabs had left Lebanon and had not become a stepping-stone for the outsider to come and slaughter you, you would have been in a much better position. That is to say, all the Arabs are present in Lebanon, in one way or another; and many of the superpowers are present in Lebanon either through these Arabs or by other means. First, you brought the problem upon yourselves, and I hope you are not offended at this candour. You have forgotten your complex surroundings. Some of our Ba'thist comrades came to us early before the hostilities began among the Lebanese people. I call it the Lebanese people, irrespective of what you call right or left. This is one people, and if you keep on using these names you will go on fighting forever, and the others will go on using you in fighting to the last Lebanese. I met with our Lebanese comrades at the National Command Headquarters and was informed that the national or progressive alliance was about to set up a socialist democratic state in Lebanon. I said to our friends, "Allow me to say this is an illusion. The Arab Nation is suffering now from retreats and deviations at various places; it has not achieved yet a state of improvement at the governments' level. Irrespective of the people and their psychological position, if the official regime representing the people is not in a state of improvement, then this will reflect on art, press, culture, information, the military and the popular position." I said to our Lebanese friends, "You should go back first to your people and tell them that Lebanon is a quicksand, not the peaceful white dove you see. Whoever enters into that country is sticking his hand into a beehive. Quit this game, and first: do not fight. You will go on killing each other to no avail. Try to convince the other parties to avoid fighting." The fighting began and went on but our position has not changed. The first thing the Lebanese should do is to realize that most of the Arab governments come to them through various

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formations, and the foreign powers through those formations, and some of them would like the situation in Lebanon to remain as it is: fighting, illegitimate profit-making, and various governments in the same Lebanese community.

First you say we have right and left, rich and poor. But these are not separated by class; not all of them are in this category or in that. We should not imagine that the people is composed of Muslims, and that the non-Muslims are excluded. Lebanese people comprise both Maronite Christians and Muslims. Suspect deviationist and exploiting elements can be found in both communities. First you have to begin by saying that we have fought and should stop at that limit of losses and start a new life. But this cannot be decided by Iraq, because we have no common borders with you, and in any case you have to make your own decision with the help of the good people who do not throw wood to the fire. You need one leadership not a score; you need one sharp mind with a sharp sword to cut a few necks and bring things back to normal. You cannot have fifty governments in Lebanon and an equal number of blocs. This cannot be solved by sweet talk or a speech by Saddam Hussein in Baghdad. It can only be solved by the Lebanese on their own territory. The Arabs may give advice and suggestions and offers, not orders, only to help the situation improve.

As I see things, these situations are not present in Lebanon. Whenever we meet with a Lebanese we talk this way. We say even the group that made any form of contact with the Zionists, if they are willing to come back to you and become part of a united, independent, Arab, national Lebanon, then you should accept them. Some of your papers will begin to say that Saddam Hussein has given up his progressive position, etc. No, this is your reality, and we should say the honest word in time.

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I say to my brothers in Lebanon you should realize two basic points: the Palestinians are present in Lebanon. If you ask us whether we accept them in Iraq, the answer is we accept no one in Iraq under similar conditions. But this is your reality and you have to adapt to it. The second point is that you are one people, and have been fighting for a long time. Lebanon has obvious trade and economic interests, and when people who have interests desire to come back they fear that any moment hostilities may erupt and their interests will be destroyed once more.

Therefore you have to return to an administrative position, though temporary, until you set things right and clear the skies. You should provide a situation protecting the united and Arab Lebanon, and preparing for a new stage of more solidarity. The powers with commercial interests should be given signs of stability, since they are the majority. We say this and we know all about the imbalance in the social, constitutional and economic structure of Lebanon. If you want unity, the majority has to act flexibly to give assurance to the minority. This is generally how we acted towards the Kurdish problem. So now the Iraqi Kurds have two rights in our country: one like the Arab and one additional. Therefore you find all our Kurdish people have gone to the polls and elected their representatives for the National Assembly. In a short time they will have elections for the Autonomy area. The Iraqi Arab citizen in Baghdad and Qadisiya elected once, and the Iraqi Kurd elected twice. This is his right; the Iraqi Kurd has an additional right over the Arab citizen from the legal and constitutional rights. Although some people may wonder, from an abstract point of principle, how could the Iraqi Kurd have two rights? At a certain time we accepted to negotiate with Barzani, though we had information that some of his men had gone to Israel for negotiations. If we had continued to refuse to negotiate with the Barzani

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leadership from 1970 we would not have reached a result. Flexibility is needed but not as a form of retreat. Flexibility is a state of preparing the necessities for advance under certain conditions. In revolutionary action, and every honest activity, this is essential.

In Lebanon this is generally what is needed. So if you go back to what you were and become united once more and stop the bleeding, then you will have won. All people, the privileged and the underprivileged will win, because you are fighting with yourself not with a foreigner. You hurt yourself when you stop your business. With the foreigner we accept unlimited bleeding and death, without surrendering a piece of land. But this is your people, in Tripoli or Beirut, east or west.

21. Iraqi External Programme

The last question was read out, though it had received answers through the previous ones. It covers a number of queries about the Iraqi foreign aid programme, the Iraqi proposal to set up an International Fund, the joint Arab action in the economic field and its effect on supporting the Arab position on the international level. Will the disaster areas like Lebanon be given priority in the Iraqi foreign aid programme?

The question was asked by AP, Orient Press and a Lebanese paper.

Mr President: We have explained our programme of aid to non-Arab countries, also our Arab programme of economic aid. We have taken an initiative at the Tunis Summit and suggested a programme of aid for Lebanon, which was supported by the brother Arabs. We were the first Arab country to pay our share, and continue to do so. We have always extended help to disaster areas in Lebanon. But the problem is not financial help. It is how to stop the bleeding in Lebanon. You cannot wound a man and shed his blood then come to feed him. First you have to stop the bleeding.

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